

CLAIMS

1 1. A network comprising a plurality of switching nodes interconnected by communication links, the
2 switching nodes transferring digital data packets thereamong over said communication links,

3 A. at least one switching node in the network pre-establishing a bypass virtual circuit through
4 the network through at least one other switching node in the network and over respective
5 ones of said communication links to define a path through said network that bypasses at least
6 one of said communication links connected to said at least one switching node and another
7 switching node which is also connected to said at least one of said communication links,

8 B. the at least one switching node transferring ones of said digital packets, which it would
9 otherwise transfer to the another switching node, over the bypass virtual circuit in the event
10 of a malfunction of the respective at least one of said communication links and said another
11 switching node.

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